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ABSTRACT

This booklet was developed by early education teachers to help parents teach their children values necessary for learning and for living. The introduction identifies six lifelong values, discusses the important role played by parents in teaching these values, and offers a checklist of positive ways parents interact with their children. Each of the next sections focuses on one of the lifelong values, defining the skills involved and identifying ways to encourage the child to develop those skills. The six lifelong values are: (1) confidence, which can be encouraged by giving children jobs that are appropriate to their age and ability and providing them with the tools to complete the job successfully; (2) responsibility, which can be encouraged by empowering children to do things for themselves and letting them experience the natural consequences of their behavior; (3) perseverance, which can be encouraged by extending the time spent on a task and praising the child's ability to complete a job; (4) cooperation, which can be encouraged within the family and outside the home; (5) problem solving, which can be encouraged through age-appropriate activities and materials and giving children time to think and act on their ideas; and (6) respect, which can be encouraged by parents showing respect to the child, to others, and for properties. (AC)

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Early Education
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Lifelong Values

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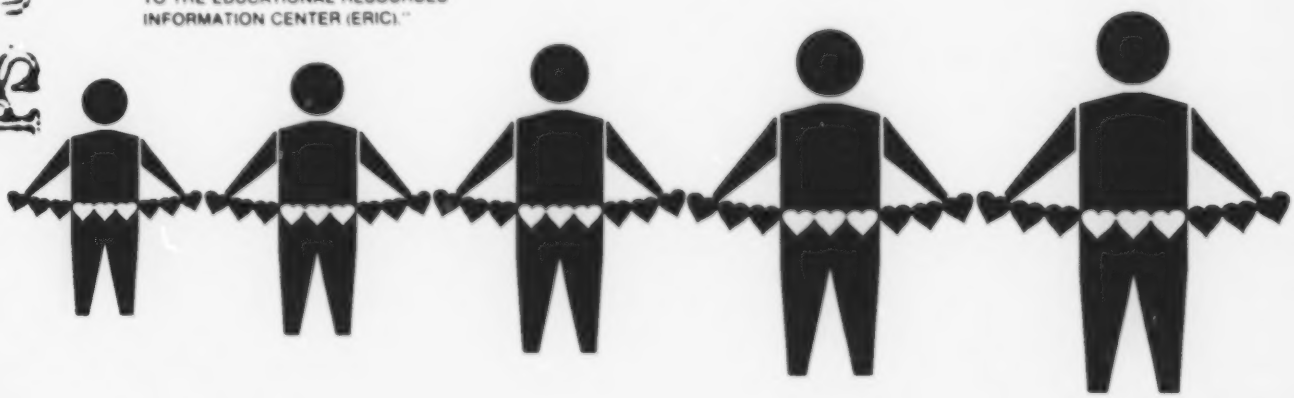

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

This Material on Lifelong Values was developed by Early Education teachers in the Ferguson-Florissant School District. These teachers work with parents in home visits and classroom settings. The preparation for this material grew out of a need to begin early with values that are necessary for success in learning and in life.

We thank the following for their contributions:
Judy Brown, Mary Caslin, Jan Dial, Ruby Kersey, Rita Powers,
Cheryl Prante, and Shirley Stenberg

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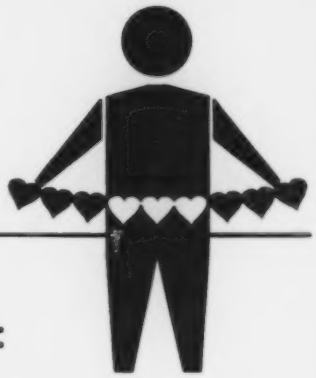
Lifelong Values
Introduction



As children grow and begin to leave home to enter the larger world, they will be learning many new skills. They also need to learn an important set of very basic skills at home.

- **Confidence** - feeling able to do it.
- **Responsibility** - doing what's right.
- **Perseverance** - completing what you start.
- **Cooperation** - working with others.
- **Problem-Solving** - putting what you know and what you can do in action.
- **Respect** - caring for others.

These are the skills labeled Lifelong Values:

- **Confidence** - feeling able to do it.
- **Responsibility** - doing what's right.
- **Perseverance** - completing what you start.
- **Cooperation** - working with others.
- **Problem-Solving** - putting what you know and what you can do in action.
- **Respect** - caring for others.

These are the skills that encourage and support learning.

These skills can be taught at home by parents. Teaching them doesn't take a lot of time, it only takes a change of focus. When you spend time together, it says to a child, "I care about you. I want to hear what is on your mind and what you are feeling." Lifelong values can be taught by everyone in the family—father, grandparent, aunt, uncle, babysitter. In these hectic, busy times, we all need to help pass on to our children the basic values that underlie our work ethic and our personal behavior.

As we look to the future, we can't predict exactly what our children need to know. As the world becomes an increasingly changing place, it's more important than ever that our children develop sound values. They need to take the skills and abilities they have learned and use them in new ways to solve new problems.

We are very hard on ourselves as parents. We are not good parents all of the time, but we are not bad parents either. We are only concerned parents who are trying to do the best we can to provide special moments with our children.

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This checklist will help you realize the good things you do with your child. Think about what you have done with your child.

_____ 1. Gave my child a hug.

_____ 2. Let my child hug me.

_____ 3. Laughed with my child.

_____ 4. Told my child I love him.

_____ 5. Read to my child.

_____ 6. Ate at least one meal with my child.

_____ 7. Asked my child what happened during the day.

_____ 8. Didn't interrupt when my child was involved in play.

_____ 9. Told my child about my day.

_____ 10. Watched a T.V. program with my child.

_____ 11. Played a quiet game indoors with my child.

_____ 12. Took a walk with my child and played outdoors.

_____ 13. Praised and encouraged my child.

_____ 14. Did some household chores with my child.

_____ 15. Cooked with my child.

A good parent always seeks to do a better job. Taking time to help your child to develop these Lifelong Values will help you see yourself as your child's most important teacher. The special times you share and the fun you experience will bring your family closer together.

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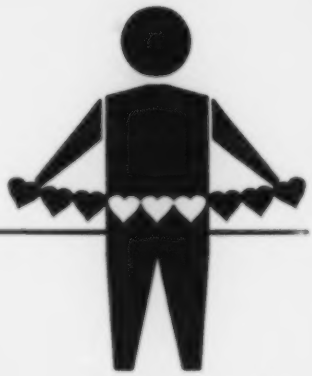
Lifelong Values
Confidence



Confidence empowers children to attempt tasks in which the outcome is uncertain. Positive experiences help increase children's sense of control, build courage and reduce their fears of the new and unexpected. This will instill an "I can handle that" attitude.

Confidence and self respect are like two sides of the same coin. Success encourages a child to like himself and try new tasks.

All through life the amount of confidence we have varies. When things are going well, when a child is well rested, well fed, and in a secure loving environment, it's easier to try that new step. As a child's environment changes, such as, a birth of a new baby, his confidence may lessen for a time. When he adjusts to his role as big brother, the confidence returns.

Ways to Encourage Confidence:

1. Give your child a job that is appropriate to his age and ability. Provide opportunities such as:

- Choosing what he wants to wear. Accept the way he dresses himself (even if the shirt is on backwards and the shoes are on the wrong feet).
- Choosing their own cereal for breakfast and pouring milk from a small pitcher.
- Making his own peanut butter sandwich.
- Ordering his own lunch at a fast food restaurant.
- Calling grandparents or friends on the telephone.

2. Give your child tools to complete a job successfully such as:

- Child size pitcher and cups for pouring.
- Scissors that are child sized and easy to use.
- Clothes that are easy to put on and off (elastic waist pants and pullover tops).
- A stool to help them reach countertop and sink.
- Unbreakable dishes and utensils.

3. Structure the job so the child can complete the task such as:

- Give him time.
- Break the job into small steps.

Instead of:
"Clean your room."
Be more specific. Say
"First pick up your books."
Later say,
"Now, put your trucks in the toy box."

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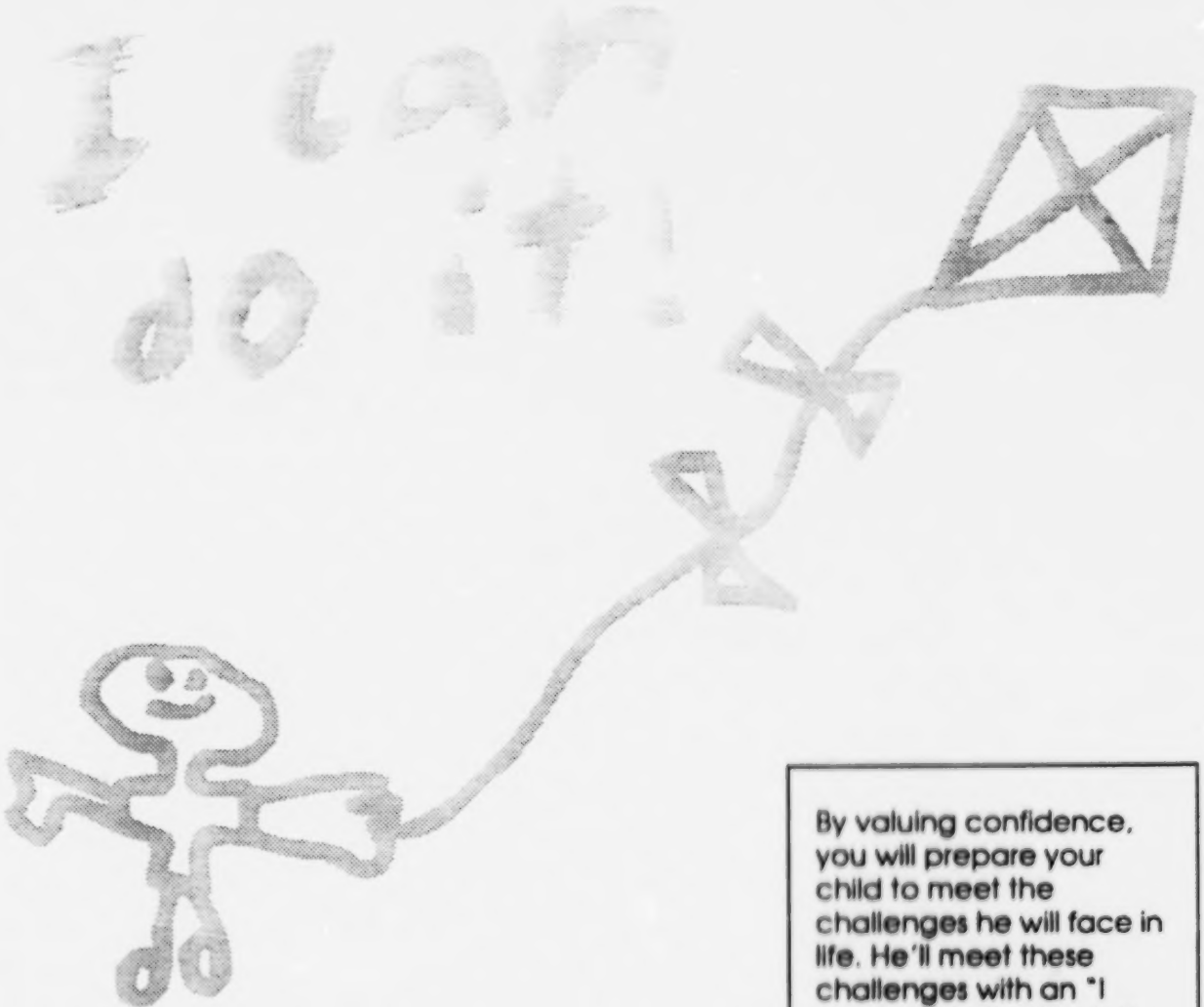
- Accept the finished product (resist the impulse to criticize or redo what your child has done).
- Use his mistakes as a cue to teach him what he needs to know (i.e., putting his shoes on the wrong feet shows you your child needs to understand about left and right, you may want to color code his shoes).

4. Help your child to be careful rather than fearful.

Don't let your fears inhibit your child from trying new things - whether it's touching a worm or climbing to the top of a slide.



By valuing confidence, you will prepare your child to meet the challenges he will face in life. He'll meet these challenges with an "I can handle it attitude!"

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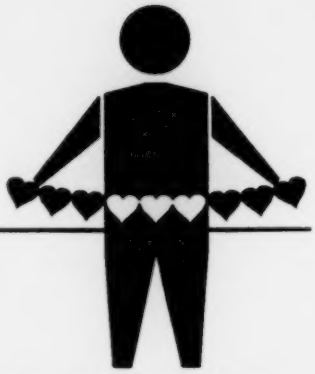
Lifelong Values
Responsibility



Responsibility is being accountable for your own behavior. It's finding ways to do the right thing as in telling the truth, respecting your own property and the property of others and caring out home and school jobs.

Responsibility enables children to do for themselves and their family.

Developing responsibility helps children build competence.

Responsibility is:

a. Being accountable for own behavior

b. Finding ways to do the right thing
- Like telling the truth
- Respecting own property and property of other
- Carry out home and school jobs

c. Personal responsibility enables children to do for themselves and their family.

Developing responsibility helps children build competence.

Ways to Encourage Responsibility:

1. Empower your child to do things for himself. Sometimes it's easier and faster for us as parents to do the job for the child. But it's not helping teach responsibility. Children need to learn to take care of themselves. This practice in self-reliance carries over to the real world.
Let's start with some activities that help children learn to take better care of their bodies and clothes.

- Chart Check - Here's a sample of a chart you can start in your home with your child. Talk about the importance of keeping clean and looking neat. When the child accomplishes the task provided, have him check it off, praise his efforts and provide a small, appropriate reward. You might let the child select his own special kind of toothpaste or brand of soap.

	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat
I look neat							
I brush my teeth							
I wash my face							
I wash my hands							
I dress myself							

- Put in Place - In helping your child organize his own room, it helps to have a place for books, toys and clothes. Gather boxes and label them or provide laundry baskets. Another rod can be attached to a closet at a lower level so children can hang up their own clothes. When rooms are neat and organized, children's play is more appealing.

- Beat the Clock - Four-year-olds do not have a well-developed sense of the time it takes to do things. Play games with a cookie timer. Play "Beat the Clock" by saying:
"Can you put on your pants by the time the bell rings?"
"See if you can beat the clock."

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2. Let your child experience the natural consequences of their behavior.
It's very painful for parents to see their children make mistakes and to have others see them make mistakes. All of us, including children, learn by making mistakes. By protecting our children, we are robbing them of a wonderful learning opportunity. We have to think when we are overprotective if we are really meeting our child's needs or our own needs to be perceived as a good parent.

3. Give your child appropriate household jobs.
Remember to give enough time to complete the job. How do you know what is enough time? Watch your child. Some children move slowly, others more quickly. Match your expectations to your child.

Here are some suggestions for appropriate jobs.
- Set napkins on the table or only the forks by each plate.
- Water the plants. (Parent must show him how. Choose containers that the child can easily use.)
- Feed the pets.
- Pick up the toys.
- Put away dirty clothes.
- Fold dish towels.
- Match socks.

It's also important for your child to choose how he or she wants to help. Give two choices and ask which one would he like to do.
"Would you like to pick up the trucks or the blocks?"

4. Help your child find ways to do the right thing.
As a parent, we have to model honest, responsible behavior. Children learn by example.
- Read books with your child that deal with honesty, thoughtfulness and other traits you want to encourage, such as:
  "Ask Mr. Bear," Flack
  "Alfie Gives a Hand," Hughes
  "Do You Know What I'll Do?" Zolotov
  "The Cupboard," John Burningham
  "A Special Trade," Sally Witman
  "Amos and Boris," William Steig
- Watch TV with your child and discuss why the characters' behavior is right or wrong.

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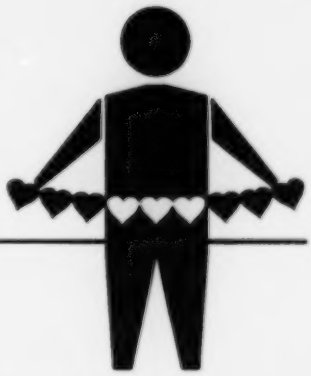
When children are given jobs to do at home and in school, it's important to give them enough time to complete the job. If you ask your child to dress himself, give him time to make his choice and complete the job. Adults can quickly dress, but four-year-olds do not always have the motor skills to dress themselves with ease. When shopping for clothing for young children, choose clothing that is easy to put on and take off, such as, pull-over shirts and elastic-waist pants and skirts. Belts are difficult for four-year-olds to buckle. This kind of clothing gives children a feeling of success in dressing.

Looking to the Future
When your child grows up, he will be responsible for his actions. He will meet deadlines and fulfill his job expectations.

Lifelong Values
Perseverance



Perseverance is the ability to stay with a task until it is completed. Perseverance requires patience and determination. People who persevere don't give up when the task gets hard. They think of ways to solve the problem, and they keep at it until it's done. Perseverance enables us to reach our goals.

The kind of jobs we give young children to do are important. The jobs will determine if they experience success or failure. Children from 3-5 years of age are just developing the ability to stay with a task for approximately 10 to 20 minutes. Children can experience success in completing a task if they have a choice between two or three activities.

Remember whatever job you ask your children to do, make sure they are capable of doing it. Children at this age need to be involved in activities in which they're interacting with materials and their environment—building with blocks, playing with play dough, finger painting, drawing pictures for their family, exploring their back yard, etc. Most 4-year-olds find it difficult and frustrating to be asked to sit at a table and do workbook-like activities.

When children initiate their own active explorations and play, they can stay with the activity longer.

Ways to Encourage Perseverance:

1. Observe closely the interests of your children. Over a period of a week, jot down the activities your children stay with the longest. Use your knowledge of their interests to help them stay on a task. If they like to play with cars and trucks, you might pretend the toy box is the garage to drive toys into.

2. Extend the time.
The activity could be play or a job you are both doing. The important factor in helping them stay with the task is to follow their lead. If they are building with blocks and choose a red block to place on the green, you do the same with your building.

Follow their lead in conversation. They talk, then you talk, i.e.:

Child:"My red truck goes fast."
Mother: "My red truck goes fast to the store."
Child:"My red truck is going to get ice cream."

Let your children make the decisions about the play. It's your interaction as a parent that's important, and by allowing them to use "their ideas," you are extending their time in play.

You might say:

- "I'm going to pick up all the red blocks. What color are you going to put away?"
- "Drive those cars into the garage, a thunderstorm is coming." (Make storm noises.)
- "Would you like to wash or dry these Barbie dishes before we put them away?"

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3. Praise your children's ability to complete a job.
Be specific and describe what you see. This makes it meaningful.

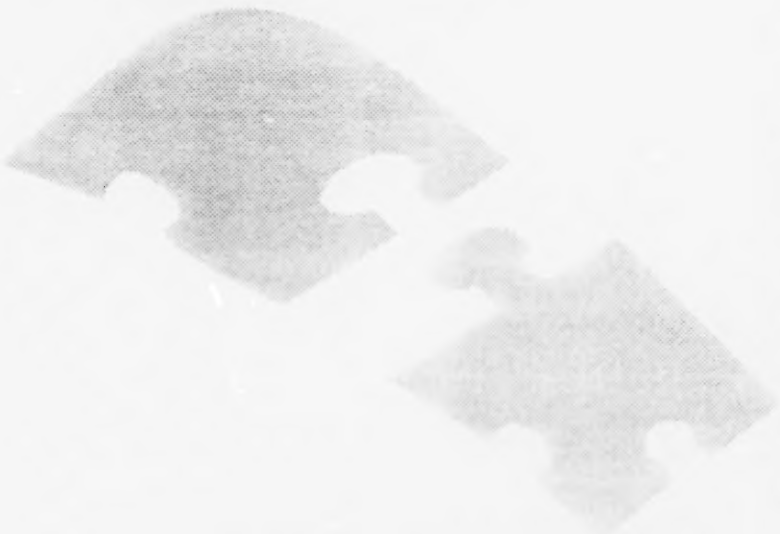
Rather than say, "Good boy."
(Child is thinking, "What made me be a good boy?")

You might say, "You put each car in it's case. That's completing the job."
(Child thinks: "I know now to get a job done.")

Ways to Encourage Perseverance over a Longer Period of Time

Begin a project with your children.
Help your children see that not all projects can be finished immediately. Working on a project builds patience. You need to find a place in your home where you can leave projects out so new ideas can be generated. Children need experiences building patience to help prepare them for lifelong goals. Choose a project that's fun like:

- Building with Legos and blocks over time.
- Sewing projects like a picture with yarn and burlap.
- Planting a garden.
- Working on a large jigsaw puzzle.
- Pasting photos in a scrapbook.
- Making books.



By valuing perseverance, you will prepare your children for the realization that reaching a goal doesn't happen overnight but takes time and effort.

Looking to the Future
When your children grow up, they will have patience and keep at a job until it's done. They will finish the job! complexity of learning to play and cooperate with others their own age, the support and suggestions of adults is sometimes needed.

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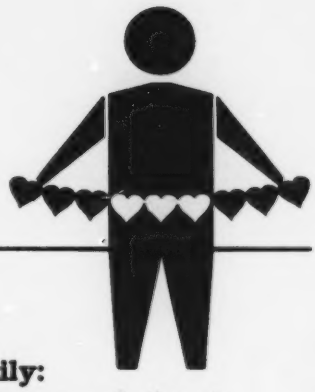
Lifelong Values
Cooperation



Cooperation is the ability to build relationships within the family and with peers. To cooperate, we need to consider the perspective of others and to negotiate and apply rules.

At first, children can only see the world from their own point of view. (This is the egocentric stage in social development.) Your children are not selfish or insensitive to others. It simply means they cannot yet tell the difference between their own ideas and feelings and the feelings of others.

As they grow and change, they will begin to tell the difference between others' thoughts and feelings; but they will see these as obstacles to their own ideas and wants.

Next, they will recognize the difference between others and try to persuade them to their own point of view.

Eventually, your children will be able to accept differences among others, and this will increase their ability to cooperate and show care and concern.

Ways to Encourage Cooperation:

1. Cooperation within the family:

a. Guide your children in awareness of others' feelings.

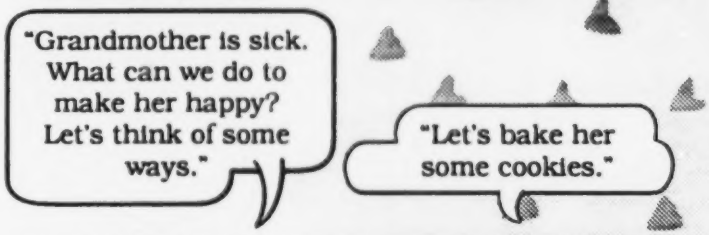
b. Model how you feel (I feelings).

"I feel frustrated and angry when you run away in the store."

"I feel happy when I see you and your brother reading a book together."

c. Name the feelings of others in the family. (This develops the ability to see another point of view empathy.)

d. Help your children show concern for others. When someone in the family is feeling sad or is sick, use this as an opportunity to think together of ways to cheer that person.



e. Use books as a way to promote identification with others' feelings.

When you read the story of the "Three Bears" ask, "How dic Baby Bear feel when he found his chair broken?" Read books that stress friendship and cooperation, such as:

- "Horton Hatches an Egg," Dr. Seuss
- "Frog and Toad are Friends," Arnold Lobel
- "Berenstein Bear Books," Stan and Jan Berenstein
- "The Doorbell Rang," Pat Hutchins

2. Cooperation outside the home:

a. With peers:

Most children benefit from having peers invited to their homes for relaxed visits where play can be supervised and encouraged.

Playing with others requires many social skills such as: who will lead, whose turn is it, the ability to stand up for one's rights, the ability to back down at times. Given the

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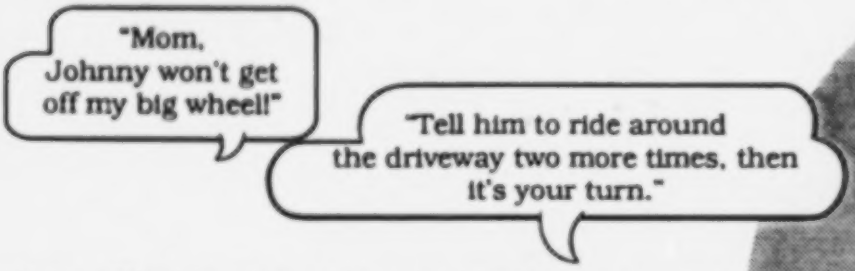
complexity of learning to play and cooperate with others their own age, the support and suggestions of adults is sometimes needed.



When difficulties arise, resist the temptation to be overly sympathetic. Take a matter-of-fact approach.

If neither child can cooperate, suggest other activities. The big wheel may have to be put away until another time.

b. Sharing with other children:
Parents are often surprised when their children won't share a toy that they have not even played with for a long time. Their children may want or need reassurance that their place in the home has not changed by the visit of the other child. Here are some ways you might help your children learn to share:

- Reassure your children that this is their toy but the visitor would appreciate a turn and will give it back.
- Let your children make the choice as to which toy they would like to share.
- Forcing your children to share will only build resentment.
- Before a visitor comes encourage your children to share their toys and if there is special toy they are not ready to share put it away.

c. Negotiating and applying rules with peers:
The opportunity to make and use rules is essential for moral growth because it fosters cooperation and is based on a mutual respect for others. Rules are cooperative agreements that change. Here are some ideas and strategies to help your children negotiate and apply rules:

- Give your children lots of opportunities to play board games and other games that involve turn-taking.
- Choose a game your children already have and let them make up new rules for the game and explain them.
- As your children engage in play with others, let them determine their own rules as the need arises. (Try not to solve problems for them unless they are hurting each other or damaging property).

"Try to see how high you can build that building together."

Instead of this:
"Did that bad boy take your big wheel again?"

Say this:
"Use your words and tell him you are waiting for your turn. If that doesn't work, come back and we'll think of something else."

By teaching your children cooperation, they will learn to stand up for themselves, yet work well, with a group. They won't always have to have their own way.

Looking to the Future
When your children grow up, they will be able to work cooperatively with their co-workers and negotiate and apply rules that are important in life.

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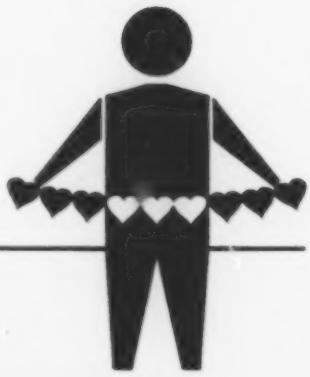
Lifelong Values
Problem-Solving



Problem-solving is the ability to take what you know and come up with a new solution to a problem. Problem-solving is the foundation that helps children think, reason and make their own decisions. It enables children to accomplish the goals they choose in life.

One of the ways children learn is by watching and listening to others. As problems crop up in everyday life, by thinking out loud we are modeling problem-solving skills.

Examples:
- "We are having eight people for dinner, and there is only room for six people at the table. I wonder what we should do."

- "We have bird seed but our bird feeder broke. What can we use to build a new bird feeder?"

As you and your child are solving problems together you might ask:

- "Does it work?"
- "What else can I do?"
- "What's going to happen?"
- "How did we do?"

Ways to Encourage Problem-Solving:

1. **Age-appropriate activities and materials**
   Giving children materials that can be used in many different ways helps children understand that there is more than one way to accomplish a task. Materials such as play dough (letting children decide what they want to make with the play dough), blocks (how many different ways can the blocks be used to build with?), and collage materials (paint, scissors, tape, paper, paste) offer opportunities for children to explore, create and experience solving problems. Children are making judgments about size, cause and effect, and special relationships.
   "How can I make the paper stick together?"
   "What happens if I put this block on top?"
   "How can I build a ramp for my cars?"
   "What size does it need to be?"

2. **Take advantage of everyday opportunities**
   Some of the following are just a few examples:

- You're planning a birthday party—"What can we use to decorate cupcakes for our party? What kind of decorations can we make?"
- It's time to clean up and your child can't reach the sink to wash his hands. You might ask, "What are you going to do?"
- You've been to the grocery store and you have a heavy bag of groceries to put away. You ask your child to help but the bag is too heavy for him to pick up. See if your child can think of a different way to get the bag of groceries to the pantry.

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3. **Time to think and act on their ideas.**
   For children to become successful at solving problems, it's important to give them plenty of time to think and act on their ideas.
   It is even more important to accept all ideas. If we don't, they will be afraid to try again. We all learn from our mistakes. Children need that trial and error process to learn.

4. **Bedtime stories**
   When reading a bedtime story, ask your child to think of another way the story could end. Ask your child to make predictions about what we think the character will do.

Ways to Encourage Self-Evaluation
Learning is more valuable to children when they evaluate their own performance.

Questions to discuss with children:

1. "What happened?"
2. "Why did or didn't it work?"
3. "What works best?"
4. "What else could you try?"
5. "What would you change?"

When children aren't given the opportunity to solve problems and use materials creatively, they aren't able to take charge of their own learning and make appropriate decisions.

Looking to the Future
Today's problems are very complex. We are concerned about jobs, the environment and our economy. We need people with creative ideas to help solve these complicated problems.

No one knows what the future holds for our children. But we do know if we help them to make decisions, become independent thinkers and creative problem-solvers, they will be able to handle what the future has in store.

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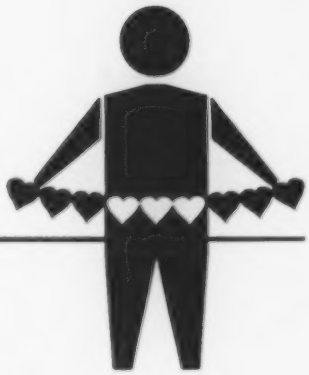
Lifelong Values
Respect



Respect is caring for others. It is showing regard for self, others and their property and for those in authority.

Mutual trust and respect is essential for developing caring and considerate relationships with all people.

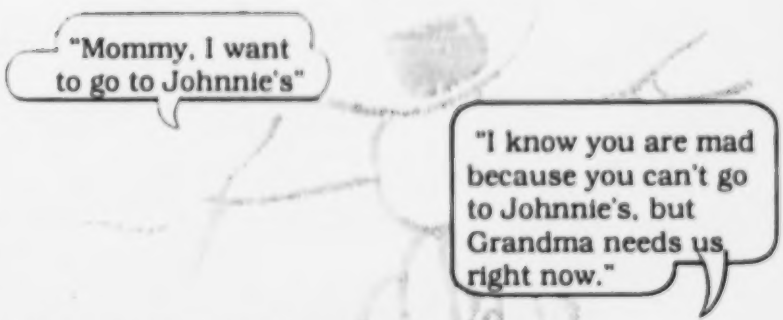
Ways to Encourage Respect:

1. **Showing Respect to Your Child**
   a. Listen carefully to what he has to say and respond in a positive way to what he is saying.

   Mom: "What did you do in school today?"
   Child: "I played in the gym and painted a great big dinosaur with big teeth!"
   Mom: "Sounds like you really enjoyed painting today."

   b. Accept your child's feelings, even negative ones. Restate what you think your child is feeling rather than disregard his feelings.

   Instead of this:
   "Stop your crying." "You are a big baby."
   Say this:
   "You are feeling sad because I can't take you with me today. You'll come on another day."



Activity: Personal Listening
It's very difficult when you are busy, but:

- Did you get down on your child's level and look in his eyes when he talks?
- Write down what your child said this week and read it back to him.

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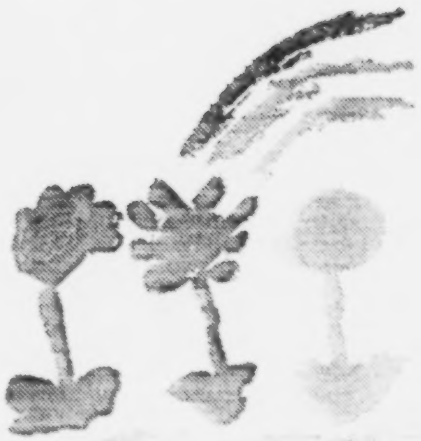
2. Showing Respect to Others

Children learn by watching what we do as well as by what we say.We show by our actions in our own neighborhoods that we are caring, helpful people. Here are a few ways we can show our children how to respect and care for others:

- Bringing a food basket to a sick person.
- Helping an elderly neighbor cut his grass.
- Gathering used toys to share with those less fortunate.
- Helping create a card for Grandma or Grandpa to show caring.
- Modeling how to say "please" and "thank you" by saying it to him and to others.



3. Showing Respect for Property

As you show respect for your child's property or possessions, he will learn respect for others' property.

a. When children bring home paintings and work from school which they value, show your respect for them by:
   - Displaying their work.
   - Providing a box for children to save their special work.

b. We also show respect by permitting children to make choices about their property such as clothes, food or toys. For example:
   - "Would you like to wear the blue shorts or green shorts today?"
   - "Which would you like to eat corn or green beans?"
   - "Would you like to play in your room or in the back yard?"

c. We can guide children in caring for their property and the property of others by stepping in when they are not using that property appropriately.

   - "Books are not for writing in and tearing up. Books are for reading. Let's sit down and read a book."
   - "Toys belong in the toy box not on the steps. We'll put this away until you can use it better."
   - "Couches are not for standing on. They are for sitting."

When children's ideas and feelings are not respected, they respond with rebellion and fear or they learn to be sneaky and do what they want when adults aren't watching.

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By respecting your child's ideas, feelings and property, you will help your child be polite and thoughtful and respect other people and their property.

Looking to the Future

When your child grows up she will be a pleasure to work with. She will listen to the people she works with and her clients. Morale will be high in her department because she respects others.